

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Currently amended) ~~The control apparatus of the image forming system according to claim 1,~~ A control apparatus of an image forming system, the control apparatus comprising:

an interface which performs data communications with another device connected to a network;

a management table which manages an operation state of each of image forming apparatuses connected to the network; and

a controller which, when a printing request for a tandem print job that corresponds to one print job that is distributed to the image forming apparatuses to complete the one print job, is received, prepares a schedule in which the tandem print job is distributed to the image forming apparatuses connected to the network based on the operation state of each of the image forming apparatuses, and transmits a content of the printing that is executed by each of the image forming apparatuses according to the schedule, wherein one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses includes the control apparatus, and the image forming apparatus including the control apparatus serves as a master apparatus, while the image forming apparatuses other than the master apparatus serve as slave apparatuses.

3-8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently amended) ~~The control apparatus of the image forming system according to claim 1, wherein~~ A control apparatus of an image forming system, the control apparatus comprising:

an interface which performs data communications with another device connected to a network;

a management table which manages an operation state of each of image forming apparatuses connected to the network; and

a controller which, when a printing request for a tandem print job that corresponds to one print job that is distributed to the image forming apparatuses to complete the one print job, is received, prepares a schedule in which the tandem print job is distributed to the image forming apparatuses connected to the network based on the operation state of each of the image forming apparatuses, and transmits a content of the printing that is executed by each of the image forming apparatuses according to the schedule and wherein the controller causes a user to designate the user's desired ending time of the tandem print job when the tandem print job is received, and causes another print job to interrupt the tandem print job if an estimated ending time is earlier than the desired ending time designated by the user when a printing request for the print job is received during execution of the tandem print job.

10. (Currently amended) The control apparatus of the image forming system according to ~~claim 4~~ claim 9, wherein the controller causes a user to designate the user's desired ending time of the tandem print job when the tandem print job is received, and causes a print job having higher priority than that of the tandem print job to interrupt the tandem print job if an estimated ending time is earlier than the desired ending time designated by the user when a printing request for the print job having higher priority is received during execution of the tandem print job.

11. (Currently amended) The control apparatus of the image forming system according to ~~claim 4~~ claim 9, wherein the controller causes a user to designate the user's desired ending time of the tandem print job when the tandem print job is received, prepares a schedule in which a print job having higher priority than that of the tandem print job interrupts the tandem print job under execution when the print job having higher priority is received, disables an interrupt of the print job having higher priority when an estimated ending time of the tandem print job according to the schedule is later than the user's desired ending time, and enables the interrupt of the print job having higher priority if the estimated ending time is earlier than the user's desired ending time, thereby executing the schedule in which the print job having higher priority interrupts the tandem print job.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently amended) ~~The control apparatus of the image forming system according to claim 12,~~ A control apparatus of an image forming system, the control apparatus comprising:

an interface which performs data communications with another device connected to a network;

a management table which manages an operation state of each of image forming apparatuses connected to the network; and

a controller which, when a printing request for a tandem print job that corresponds to one print job that is distributed to the image forming apparatuses to complete the one print job, is received, prepares a schedule in which the tandem print job is distributed to the image forming apparatuses connected to the network based on the operation state of each of the image forming apparatuses, and transmits a content of the printing that is executed by each of the image forming apparatuses according to the schedule,

wherein the controller provides an originator of the tandem print job with options of combinations of image forming apparatuses to execute the tandem print job, and prepares a schedule of the tandem print job in accordance with one of the options selected by the image forming apparatuses or the external device, and

wherein the controller provides estimated ending time of the tandem print job corresponding to the options of combinations.

14. (Currently amended) The control apparatus of the image forming system according to ~~claim 1~~ claim 13, wherein when the controller receives a printing request for a print job having higher priority than that of the tandem print job under execution of the tandem print job, the controller changes the schedule to a schedule in which the print job having higher priority interrupts the tandem print job and notifies an originator of the tandem print job that the schedule is changed.

15. (Currently amended) The control apparatus of the image forming system according to ~~claim 1~~ claim 13, wherein when the controller receives a printing request for a print job other than the tandem print job under execution of the tandem print job, the controller causes a user to decide whether to permit an interrupt of the print job and then

determines whether the interrupt of the print job is enabled or disabled based on the user's decision.

16. (Currently amended) The control apparatus of the image forming system according to ~~claim 1~~ claim 13, wherein when the controller receives a printing request for a print job other than the tandem print job under execution of the tandem print job, the controller causes a user to decide whether to permit an interrupt of the print job, changes a schedule under execution to a schedule that the print job interrupts when the user permits the interrupt of the print job and inhibits the print job from interrupting the schedule under execution when the user does not permit the interrupt.

17. (Original) The control apparatus of the image forming system according to claim 15, wherein when the user does not decide whether to permit an interrupt of the print job within a given time period, the controller determines whether the interrupt of the print job is enabled or disabled based on contents preset in the controller.

18-19. (Cancelled)

20. (Currently amended) ~~The method according to claim 18, further comprising:~~
A method of controlling an image forming system, the method comprising:

preparing a schedule in which a tandem print job that corresponds to one print job that is distributed to a plurality of image forming apparatuses to complete the one print job, is distributed to the plurality of image forming apparatuses connected to a network based on an operation state of each of the image forming apparatuses when a printing request for the tandem print job is received;

transmitting a content of the printing to be executed by each of the image forming apparatuses based on the schedule, to each of the image forming apparatuses;

causing a user to designate user's desired ending time of the tandem print job when the tandem print job is received; and

causing another print job to interrupt the tandem print job if an estimated ending time is earlier than the user's desired ending time when the print job is received under execution of the tandem print job.

21. (Currently amended) The method according to ~~claim 18~~ claim 20, further comprising:

causing a user to decide whether to permit an interrupt of a print job other than the tandem print job when the print job is received under execution of the tandem print job; and ~~determines~~ determining whether the interrupt of the print job is enabled or disabled based on user's decision.